**What to expect from a pantomime performance**

Attending a pantomime is a wonderful experience for the whole family or a social/group trip. Although we like to say that pantomimes are suitable for everyone, we would draw attention to some of the characteristics that you may wish to consider if you have never experienced one before.

**The Auditorium**

Pantomime performances are often sold out. Therefore, expect the foyer, bar, toilets and auditorium to be busy. You should arrive in plenty of time to park, get comfortable and take your allocated seats. The show will start as near to the published time as possible. The auditorium will have dimmed lighting when you enter, and there will be several complete black outs during the show. Some children may require reassurance if they are not used to the lights and sounds of a theatre environment.

**Content of the story & characters**

Pantomimes are generally based on classic children’s stories (e.g. Cinderella, Sleeping Beauty, Aladdin and Jack & the Beanstalk). However, they are adapted to include characters that are popular with children. Along with Princesses, Princes, Fairies and comic characters, there will often be a “baddie” which helps to emphasise the moral of the story and happy ending. Some small children may find that character a bit scary at first, but they are encouraged to boo any baddies. In a traditional pantomime men may play women and vice versa. The main comedy character is the Dame, who is generally played by a man.

**Running time**

A pantomime will generally run for just over two hours, with an interval halfway through. Drinks, snacks and ice cream are available in that break.

**Lights / Stage effects / Pyrotechnics**

The Radlett Centre does not own or use any strobes, as they are known to trigger problems for individuals who are sensitive to such issues. However, flashing lights are an important part of any pantomime production, and these may give the impression of a strobe. The show will include some pyrotechnics (indoor fireworks) and some loud bangs. For this reason, children must stay in their seats and not go near the stage.

**Sound**

All of the cast will wear microphones, and the singing, dialogue and instruments will be amplified.

**Humour**

Although there will never be any bad language in the pantomime, some of the jokes may be defined as double entendres (double meaning). They are designed to go over the heads of the young children, whilst amusing the adults.

**Child Safety / Health & Safety**

Children under the age of 14 must be accompanied by an adult at all times, and if they have additional needs, must be accompanied by an appropriate carer. If anyone is taken ill during a performance, the duty staff should be notified at the first opportunity. They will decide if it is safe to continue with the performance, or in a severe case, whether the show should be paused. Although staff are trained in basic first aid, it is important to appreciate that they are not medically trained, so they are limited in the treatment that they can give. All fire exits are clearly marked, and in the unlikely event of an evacuation, it will be managed by the Radlett Centre staff.